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THE HOME OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Crowds of well-wishers were greeted at his doorway
by Abraham Lincoln during the 1860 campaign.

A MEMORIAL MAINTAINED

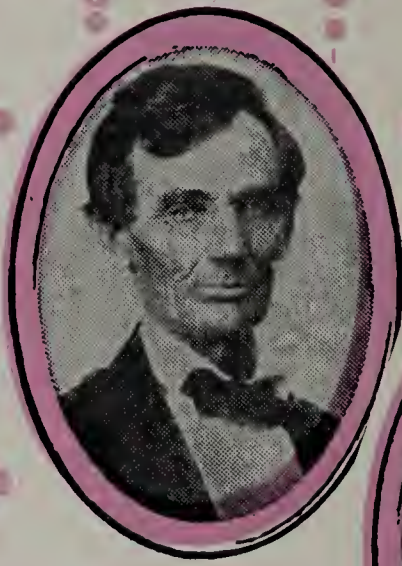
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Guide Service always available





Abraham Lincoln
1809 - 1865



Mary Todd Lincoln
1818 - 1882



ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S HOME

Abraham Lincoln's home on the northeast corner of Eighth and Jackson streets is the shrine most intimately associated with his life in Springfield. It is the only home he ever owned and to it he brought his wife and infant son, Robert Todd, after the first two years of their married life had been spent at boarding houses and at the Globe Tavern, where board and room were \$4.00 a week.

Abraham Lincoln purchased the house and lot for \$1,500 on May 2, 1844 from the Rev. Charles Dresser, the Episcopal rector who had married him and Mary Todd on Nov. 4, 1842. The house is the original structure, standing on the same location as when the Lincolns lived in it. However, the Lincolns did make some changes while they lived here. Originally it was a cottage of one and one-half stories, built in 1839 on a lot 50 x 152 feet. The wall and fence at the front were built in 1850. Lincoln wrote to Nathaniel Hay, local brick maker on June 11, and ordered "brick of suitable quality and sufficient number . . . to build a front fence on a brick foundation."

Five years later a similar fence was continued about one-fourth the length of the lot on Jackson Street with a high board fence running to the carriage house. Mrs. Lincoln in 1856, at a cost of \$1,300, had the house

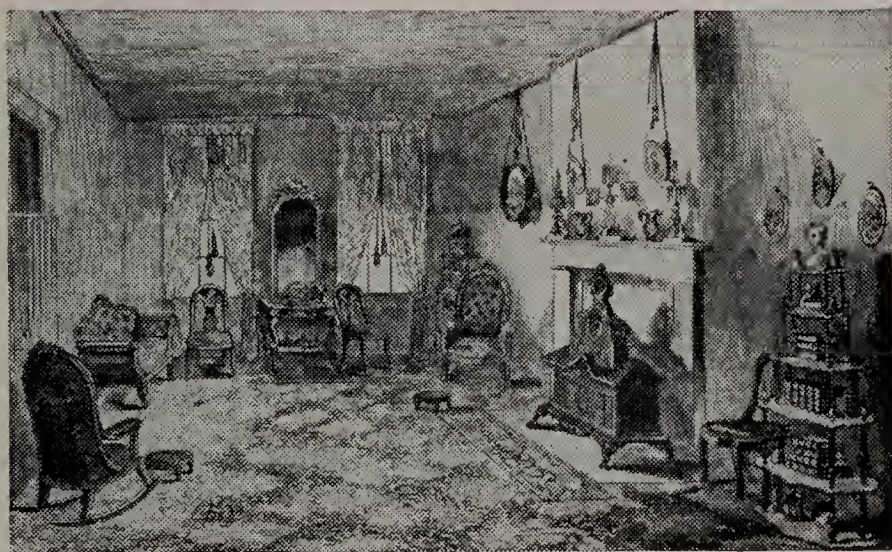
made a full two stories. The front staircase was a part of the 1839 structure and led to the two half-story upstairs rooms.

The house is made of native hard woods: the framework and the floors are oak; the laths are hand-split hickory; the doors, door frames, and weatherboarding are black walnut. The original shingles were hand-split walnut. The construction was with wooden pegs plus a sparing use of handmade nails.

The Lincolns made this their home from May, 1844 to February, 1861, except for the first part of Lincoln's term in Congress, when it was rented to Cornelius Ludlum for \$90 for a year beginning Nov. 1, 1847. Mrs. Lincoln and the two little boys, Robert and Edward, spent part of the time in Washington with Mr. Lincoln and the remainder at her father's home in Lexington, Kentucky. Three of the Lincolns' sons were born in this house, Edward Baker, "Eddie" (1846-1850), William Wallace, "Willie" (1850-1862) and Thomas, "Tad" (1853-1871), and "Eddie" died here.

Lincoln retained ownership and rented the house to Lucian Tilton, head of the Great Western railroad (now the Wabash) for \$350 a year. The Tiltons continued to live in the house after Lincoln's assassination until they moved to Chicago in 1869. From then until 1880 the house was occupied by George H. Harlow, who was private secretary to Gov. Richard J. Oglesby, city editor of the *Illinois State Journal*, and Secretary of State for two terms. For the next three years Dr. Gustav Wendlandt, physician and later editor of a German-language newspaper, lived here.

Leslie's Weekly 1861 picture of parlor





Robert Todd Lincoln
1843 - 1926



Thomas "Tad" Lincoln
1853 - 1871



William "Willie"
Wallace Lincoln
1850 - 1862

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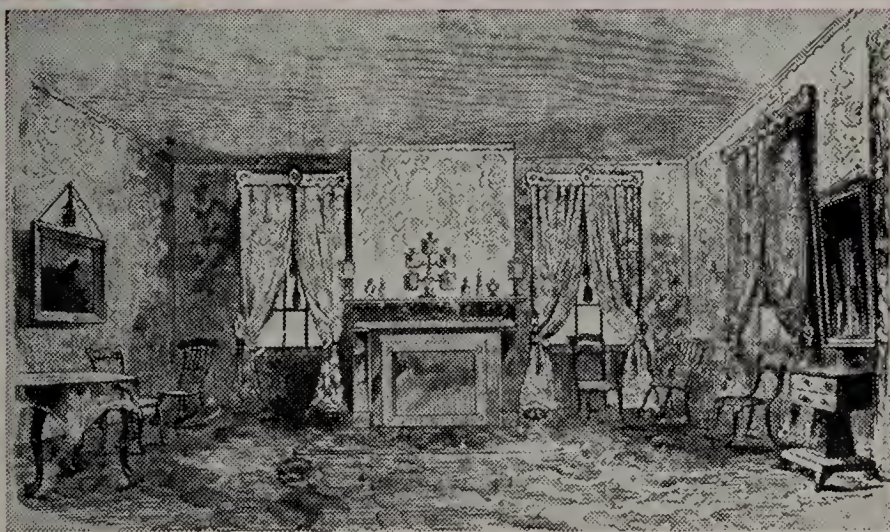
In 1883 Osborn H. Oldroyd rented the home and made it a museum for his extensive collection of Civil War relics and Lincoln mementoes. Oldroyd was instrumental in persuading Robert Todd Lincoln to give the property to the State of Illinois and this was done in a deed recorded July 29, 1887. Oldroyd was then named the first custodian, a position he held until 1893 when he moved his collection to Washington, D. C. and later sold it to the federal government.

When the Lincolns went to Washington in 1861 they held a public sale of their household furnishings, some of which were bought by the Tiltons who had rented the house. This furniture was taken to Chicago by the Tiltons in 1869 and was lost in the Great Fire of 1871, while the rest of the Lincolns' household goods were eventually dispersed into the hands of private Lincoln collectors and museums. During the past several decades much of the original furniture has been gradually returned to the Home and this has been used as a nucleus in restoring the house as nearly as possible to its appearance while the Lincolns lived there. The State of Illinois has been assisted in its restoration work by the Abraham Lincoln Association of Springfield and the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Illinois. In 1952 the house was

painted Quaker brown, which historical research had shown was the color of the home when Lincoln lived there. An extensive program of restoration has resulted in the entire second floor and kitchen being opened to the public.

It was in the north parlors of the home on May 19, 1860 that Lincoln received the committee appointed to notify him formally of his nomination for the presidency. After this ceremony members of the committee were conducted to the sitting room where they were introduced to Mrs. Lincoln. There was no formal ceremony after the election, but from then until the Lincolns left for Washington the house was filled many hours of the day and night with well-wishers and office seekers.

On the last day that the Lincolns occupied the home they held a grand public levee. The hours were from 7 p.m. to midnight and the St. Louis, Missouri Democrat thus described the affair: "The house was thronged by thousands, a grand outpouring of citizens and



Leslie's Weekly 1861 picture of sitting room

strangers. Mr. Lincoln received the people as they entered, then they passed on and were introduced to Mrs. Lincoln near the center of the parlor. She was dressed plainly but richly with beautiful full train, white moire, antique silk, a small French lace collar, her neck ornamented with a string of pearls. Her head dress was a simple and delicate vine arranged with much taste, but little jewelry and this was well and properly adjusted. She was a lady of fine figure and accomplished address and is well calculated to grace and do honors at the White House."

LINCOLN'S FAREWELL TO SPRINGFIELD, FEBRUARY 11, 1861

The Illinois State Journal of February 12, 1861, reported "despite bad weather . . . hundreds of his fellow citizens, without distinction of party had assembled . . . to bid him God-speed." After silently shaking hands with many of his well-wishers, the President-elect and party boarded the train. Shortly before eight o'clock, "On the platform of the rear car Lincoln bared his head to the rain, faced his friends, and stood silently struggling with his feelings . . . then slowly, solemnly spoke . . ."

My Friends—

No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, and a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

The original draft of the above version is in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, now in the Library of Congress. The Springfield Illinois State Journal version is on a plaque in the Lincoln Tomb.

After the train pulled away Lincoln wrote down a few sentences of his Farewell and it was then completed by John G. Nicolay, his private secretary.

Write to the Division of Parks and Memorials, State Office Building, Springfield, for further information concerning Illinois Parks and Memorials.

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